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# Fair Work Commission Emissions Reduction Plan

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Financial year 2023-24

Version 1.0



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# Acknowledgement of Country

The Fair Work Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of the of the lands on which we work, and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.



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# Declaration and Sign Off

## Introduction

Climate change will continue to have significant effects on the environment, society and economy, with impacts felt across the Government's operations. The Fair Work Commission acknowledges that human behaviours, pollution and consumption patterns have both immediate and future impacts on the climate and environment, and that as a Commonwealth entity it is part of our role to mitigate and manage these impacts on our community.

This Declaration establishes our position and commitments to reduce emissions.

The Fair Work Commission supports the environmental, social and economic benefits of addressing climate change immediately. We see an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in emissions reduction.

## Commitment to achieving net zero

The Fair Work Commission is committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2030.

The Fair Work Commission recognises that climate change is occurring, and that climate change will continue to have a significant effect on the Australian environment, society and economy.

We acknowledge the central role of Government in driving a successful climate response. Hence, we declare that we are committed to reducing operational emissions, through the implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Our overall objectives align with the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy to reduce our operational emissions.

Murray Furlong, General Manager, Fair Work Commission

SIGNED BY ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITY



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# Fair Work Commission Emissions Reduction Plan

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## Introduction

International scientific consensus is that climate change is occurring and that it is driven by anthropogenic causes, with human activities having a profound impact on the concentration of greenhouse gas emissions since the start of the industrial revolution. Ultimately these activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, land clearing and agriculture, have increased greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, leading to changes in the climate system.

For the Fair Work Commission (Commission), projected changes to our climate between now and 2030 include:

- Further increase in temperatures, with more extremely hot days and fewer extremely cool days
- More heat waves that will be longer and hotter
- A decrease in cool-season rainfall across southern Australia
- Increase in wet season rainfall in the north
- More frequent, longer and more intense droughts across southern Australia
- More intense heavy rainfall throughout Australia, particularly for short-duration extreme rainfall events (storms)
- An increase in the number of high fire weather danger days and a longer fire season for southern and eastern Australia
- Fewer tropical cyclones, but a greater proportion of high-intensity storms, with large variations from year to year

## Purpose

The Commission has an essential role in managing and implementing emissions reduction initiatives set by the Australian Government's [Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy](#) (the Strategy) developed



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by Department of Finance. The Strategy is the first of many steps in the Australian Government's approach to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions in its operations and reinstatement of public emissions reporting.

This plan sets out the steps that the Commission will take to achieve APS Net Zero by 2030. This plan encompasses new and existing initiatives within the Commission to reduce emissions and contribute to the APS Net Zero target by 2030.

The goal of this plan is to provide a pathway for the Commission to meet net zero emissions targets through emissions reduction activities.

## **Net zero greenhouse gas emissions**

APS Net Zero 2030 is the target set by the Australian Government to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions from government operations by the year 2030. Net zero is achieved when consumption of resources, such as electricity, is reduced as far as possible, and energy is supplied from renewable sources. Where unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions remain, they are balanced through carbon offsetting.

From an organisational perspective, this means minimising the greenhouse gas emissions that are within our control.

## **Scope**

### **Inclusions**

Emissions reduction activities will align with the Strategy, with the initial focus on Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions. Future reviews will consider additional inclusions to align with the Strategy and organisational activities, including the consideration for Scope 3.

### **Exclusions**

Activities by Commonwealth entities that take place outside of Australia or its territories, including international air and marine travel, are not included in Australia's Nationally Determined Contribution (NCD) and are not included in the APS Net Zero 2030 target or subject to the Strategy. Entities that



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undertake these activities will act as appropriate to reduce their emissions in the relevant local context as an aspirational goal for the Australian Government to demonstrate leadership and advance Australia's climate diplomacy objectives.

## Governance

This plan will be updated annually, with a summary to be incorporated into our annual report. Progress against actions identified within the Emissions Reduction Plans are to be included in our annual reports. This, combined with annual emissions reporting, will be used as a measure of the Commission's progress towards reducing its emissions.

As part of the Net Zero in Government Operations Annual Progress Report, the Department of Finance will aggregate these measures to provide the Whole-of-Australian-Government (WoAG) aggregated emissions reductions activities.

Future iterations of this plan will align with the Offset strategy and Commonwealth Climate Disclosure requirements that are currently under development by the Climate Action in Government Operations within Department of Finance.

## Fair Work Commission operational context

The Commission is the independent national workplace relations tribunal and registered organisations regulator established by the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Fair Work Act). The Commission is responsible for administering provisions of the Fair Work Act and the registration, recognition and accountability of registered organisations under the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*.

The Commission is responsible for delivering a single planned outcome: 'Simple, fair and flexible workplace relations for employees and employers through the exercise of powers to set and vary minimum wages and modern awards, facilitate collective bargaining, approve agreements, deal with disputes and promote the financial transparency and effective governance of registered employee and employer organisations'.

As an independent tribunal, the Commission has no role in setting Government policy or in managing community infrastructure which may be susceptible to climate risks and opportunities.



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In light of the Commonwealth Climate Disclosure Reform, the Commission has established a Climate Action Committee and appointed a Chief Sustainability Officer. The Climate Action Committee will support the Chief Sustainability Officer in carrying out functions such as overseeing net zero activities and monitoring performance against net zero targets set in the Emissions Reduction Plan to ensure that the Commission will achieve net zero by 2030.

The Commission's largest office is in Melbourne. We have leases for office spaces in all Australian states and territories, with approximately 420 people working across the states and territories. Our facilities include office areas, chambers, hearing rooms and conference rooms. Some of our facilities are located in areas that are experiencing extreme temperatures and extreme weather events.

The Commission has already commenced its net zero emissions pathway in line with the direction set in the Strategy. This includes the following key activities:

- Property review to ensure efficient use of office space
- Electrical metering separation in Sydney
- Assessment of office space NABERS ratings and lease expiry dates
- Furniture refurbishment
- Establishment of a Climate Action Committee
- Appointment of a Chief Sustainability Officer
- Waste Management Education Program

## Baseline emissions

Baseline emissions are a record of greenhouse gasses that have been produced in the past and were produced prior to the introduction of any strategies to reduce emissions. The baseline emissions are the reference point against which emissions reduction can be measured.

At this stage, the APS Net Zero 2030 target includes Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions. Decisions on Scope 3 will be made in the future as further data becomes available. The baseline emissions for this plan will focus on those emissions.





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<b>Baseline year</b>	Financial year 2022-23
<b>Scope 1 emissions</b>	0 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
<b>Scope 2 emissions</b>	963 tCO <sub>2</sub> e
<b>Total emissions</b>	963 tCO <sub>2</sub> e

Time series show historical emissions trends and track the effects of emission reduction strategies. Efforts will be made to calculate the time series using the same methods and data sources in all years. However, as emissions measurements, data collection methods, methodological refinements and reporting requirements are expected to be continually added and improved upon, strategies to ensure time-series consistency are being implemented from the outset. Key to ensuring confidence in time-series consistency will be the diligent documenting of approaches to emission estimated, including methodologies and data sources, in the Net Zero in Government Operations Annual Progress Reports.

## Engagement

In the development of this plan the Commission has been working with:

- Climate Action in Government Operations, Department of Finance – to ensure that this plan aligns with the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy and the Commonwealth Climate Disclosure Pilot Guidance
- Property Service Provider – to obtain property related information and assist with procurement and energy rating assessments
- Various teams within the Commission – to consult on the current practices and identify climate related risks and opportunities
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (Portfolio) – to exchange ideas and experience, and where possible, shared considerations could be addressed to lower emissions across the portfolio
- Commonwealth entities – to discuss options for shared locations and any associated and relevant outcomes to lower emissions



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## Emissions reduction targets

In order to achieve net zero by 2030, we have adopted the following greenhouse emission reduction targets.

We project that greenhouse emissions will decrease over the next two years from 963 to 168 tCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030. This is a reduction of 83% associated with participating in the WoAG electricity contracts.

The remaining emissions are due to embedded networks where the Commission will work with landlords and the WoAG arrangements to identify and implement emissions reduction actions.

The estimates are calculated and provided by the Property Service Provider based on the amended 2022-23 emission reporting data. The estimates will be reviewed annually.

This Emissions Reduction Plan has been completed in accordance with the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy, associated guidance, reporting standards for annual emissions reporting.

## Priorities and actions

The Commission's current sustainability measures are not sufficient to achieve net zero by 2030. To achieve net zero, targeted action on existing measures and the introduction of further or new measures is required. These actions include:

- Procuring renewable electricity
- Benchmarking energy efficiency performance
- Improving building standards for new leases
- Incorporating sustainable procurement into future fit-out projects
- Planning and updating efficient lighting
- Electrification
- Developing and implementing sustainable procurement
- Considering climate impact when planning travel
- Incorporating circular economy principles into ICT purchasing
- Uplifting capability across the Commission



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## Energy

### Procuring renewable electricity

The Commission's electricity contracts in NSW, ACT and VIC will expire on 31 December 2024. The Commission will participate in the WoAG electricity contracts for those sites from 1 July 2025. The Property Services Provider is working with current electricity provider to seek required extensions to align with these dates and the existing arrangements.

Under the WoAG electricity contracts, renewable energy will be procured. Using electricity generated from a zero greenhouse-gas emitting source will reduce emissions and ensure a supply of clean energy with reduced environmental impact.

The Commission is committed to join the WoAG electricity contracts for other sites when available for participation.

The Commission will align with the WoAG outcome to address entity tenancies where embedded networks exist.

### **ACTION:**

- Consult with the Department of Finance to ensure participation in WoAG electricity procurement as per the Strategy, and replace all electricity contracts with renewable electricity
- Consult with the Property Service Provider to ensure that interim arrangements are in place before joining the WoAG electricity contracts

## Buildings

### Benchmarking energy efficiency performance

Benchmarking energy efficiency performance compares the Commission's base building and tenancy energy consumption and efficiency of office space against established NABERS (National Australian Built Environment Rating System) ratings. It helps the Commission to understand its performance as well as identifying areas for improvements.



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It is important to note that the Commission has limited control over the base buildings as all of its office spaces are leased, rather than owned. This restricts the direct actions the Commission can take. However, the Commission remains committed to influencing landlords to adopt energy-efficient practices and enhance building performance.

**ACTION:**

- For non-rated tenancies, liaise with the Property Service Provider to conduct indicative NABERS Energy ratings for all leases of 1,000 square metres or more of net lettable area by 30 June 2025
- Request the Property Services Provider to perform a new desktop assessment of tenancy NABERS Energy ratings following the completion of energy reduction initiatives
- Engage in discussions with landlords regarding the benchmarking results and NABERS Energy ratings of office spaces by 1 January 2026
- Explore potential options and seek opportunities for joint initiatives with landlords to enhance building performance and achieve net zero targets where possible

**Improving building standards for new leases**

When entering into any new lease for an office space of 1,000 square metres or more of net lettable area, with a term of four years or more, the Commission will endeavour to find a suitable building that has and maintains 5.5 star or higher base building and tenancy NABERS Energy ratings. Adopting these building standards will contribute significantly to reducing the Commission's carbon footprint.

It is important to note that the Commission's office space needs are unique due to the inclusion of hearing rooms and chambers. The building specifications are required to meet specific attributes which limit the availability of suitable buildings. In addition, such buildings often require substantial upfront investment for fit-out, and the demolition of existing tenancies would result in significant embodied emissions and waste. Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation must be undertaken to consider all critical factors, balancing operational requirements with costs, building standards, waste and disposal, and environmental impact.



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**ACTION:**

- Ensure that net zero building standards are a key consideration in discussions with landlords during lease negotiations
- Conduct a comprehensive analysis to compare the advantages and disadvantages of different leasing options

**Incorporating sustainable procurement into future fit-out projects**

The Commission is committed to incorporating sustainable principles – encompassing climate, environment, and circularity as outlined in the Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy – into future fit-out projects where appropriate. The Commission will prioritise the use of recycled content and refurbished products to reduce embodied emissions in office fit-outs and minimise environmental impact.

Value for money remains the core principle of the Commission’s procurement practices. In assessing value for money, the Commission will take into account all relevant costs and benefits over the entire life of goods and/or services, adopting a sustainable approach in accordance with the Sustainable Procurement Guide.

**ACTION:**

- Ensure that the Property Service Provider will align with the government’s Sustainability Procurement Guidance for future fit-out contracts
- Develop procedures for responsible disposal of furniture, and utilise govTree to facilitate exchange of furniture items among government agencies where possible
- Implement proper appliance management practices, including maintenance, repair, and end-of-life disposal in accordance with sustainability principles
- Engage with contractors, tenants, and stakeholders to raise awareness of recycling opportunities and encourage participation in sustainable waste management practices



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### **Planning and updating efficient lighting**

The Commission will implement lighting upgrades where they will have the greatest impact on energy consumption and emissions. In considering replacements, the Commission will assess office utilisation and avoid undertaking low impact lighting replacements to reduce embodied carbon from such projects.

Future fit-out projects will prioritise the use of efficient lighting to enhance energy efficiency, contributing to long-term reductions in energy usage.

Additionally, implementing energy-efficient lighting controls, including sensors to regulate light usage, will further enhance energy savings and support the Commission's sustainability goals.

#### **ACTION:**

- Assess appropriate office space utilisation by 30 June 2025
- Undertake upgrades that have been assessed to have significant energy reductions
- Identify and implement appropriate and efficient lighting and controls where possible
- Ensure that efficient lighting is a primary requirement in all fit-out projects

### **Electrification**

The Commission occupies leased office spaces and does not directly purchase gas. To align with the Strategy, the Commission will seek to influence existing landlords to transition their buildings to fully electrified systems where possible.

From 1 July 2024, where a lease is to be entered into for office space, the Commission will prefer all-electric buildings. By 1 January 2040, the Commission will only lease office space that is all-electric.

#### **ACTION:**

- Initiate and maintain regular dialogue with current landlords regarding electrification requirements and discuss their plans for transitioning away from gas usage
- When approaching the market for new leases, include all-electric buildings as a requirement where practical, noting that the Commission is often a minority tenant in the leased buildings



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## Procurement

### Developing and implementing sustainable procurement

The Commission will align its procurement policy with the Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy and the Sustainable Procurement Guide published by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

To ensure the successful implementation of our sustainable procurement, the Commission will proactively educate and build the capabilities of our staff in this area.

#### **ACTION:**

- Develop and publish an Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy by 1 January 2025
- Develop and implement guidance and training to support the Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy by 1 January 2025

## Fleet

The Commission does not maintain any vehicles that qualify as a fleet under the Strategy.

## Travel

### Considering climate impact when planning travel

The Commission's travel is primarily driven by the need to conduct hearings. It is a critical function of the Commission to ensure public access to justice. Given the nature of our work, travel is often necessary.

However, the Commission is committed to aligning to WoAG travel policies<sup>1</sup>, which require that travel must only be undertaken where other communication tools such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing are not suitable.

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<sup>1</sup> Resource Management Guide No. 404: Official Domestic Travel – Use of the lowest practical fare and Resource Management Guide No. 405: Official International Travel – Use of the best fare of the day



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To further support the net zero strategy, the Commission is dedicated to integrating environmental considerations into our travel decisions. This includes prioritising online hearings where feasible, opting for sustainable travel options, and minimising the carbon footprint associated with necessary travel.

We will endeavour to balance our operational requirements with our responsibility to contribute to environmental sustainability.

**ACTION:**

- Update the Commission’s travel policy to include climate considerations by 31 December 2024
- Develop and implement purpose codes within the existing travel system to facilitate reporting and data analysis and identify opportunities for reducing unnecessary travel
- Encourage travellers entitled to business class to opt for economy class to minimise carbon emissions where feasible
- Encourage use of low-emission transport options where appropriate
- Encourage selection of [hotels with NABERS ratings](#) where available and suitable

## ICT

### **Incorporating circular economy principles into ICT purchasing**

The Commission’s server infrastructure is hosted locally in our tenancies, occupying less than 1% of the floor space at each location. The workloads that are not on premise are sourced under the Volume Sourcing Arrangement through Software Marketplace – Software Licensing and Services Panel, arranged by the Digital Transformation Agency.

The Commission will incorporate circular economy principles into ICT purchasing to reduce embodied emission of the regularly upgraded ICT equipment. The Commission will consider products that are environmental, more durable over time and easy to repair and upgrade. This initiative will reduce the creation of e-waste and extend the product life, ultimately reducing emissions.

**ACTION:**

- Investigate alternative supply chain and product options to increase product lifecycle and reduce e-waste





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## People, culture and capability

### Uplifting capability across the Commission

The Commission is committed to enhancing knowledge and skills regarding climate risks and opportunities, and sustainable procurement, across the Commission and to embedding their consideration in day-to-day decision-making processes.

#### **ACTION:**

- Conduct at least one annual Lunch & Learn session on climate related topics
- Ensure completion of suitable education and training for Members and staff
- Ensure completion of sustainable procurement training for Commission staff responsible for purchasing



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## Involved participants

The Executive Management Committee were briefed and approved the plan on 11 June 2024.

The following have also been involved in the development of this plan:

Division/Branch	Title	Name
Office of General Manager	General Manager	Murray Furlong
Enabling Services Branch	Executive Director, Enabling Services	Jack Lambalk
Governance, Records and Procurement	Director Governance, Records and Procurement	Ailsa Carruthers
Finance and Resources	Chief Financial Officer Assistant Director Facilities and Security	Elsie Gong Claude Bolzan
ICT Systems	Chief Technology Officer	Joshua Pope
People and Culture	Director People and Culture Assistant Director Learning and Development	Kate Purcell Ryan Harley



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## Related documents

- Australia's Nationally Determined Contribution
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*
- *Net Zero Economy Authority Bill 2024*
- Commonwealth Climate Disclosure Policy
- Commonwealth Climate Disclosure Pilot Guidance
- Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy
- Commonwealth Risk Management Policy
- Climate Risk and Opportunity Management Program
- Commonwealth Procurement Rules
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy
- ESP Policy Reporting Framework
- Sustainable Procurement Guide
- Commonwealth Property Management Framework (RMG 500)
- Commonwealth Property Disposal Policy
- Guidance – Disposal of Commonwealth Property
- National Waste Policy Action Plan
- Data and Digital Government Strategy
- Buy Australian Plan
- *Modern Slavery Act 2018*
- Annual reports for non-corporate Commonwealth entities (RMG 135)
- National Energy Performance Strategy
- National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting scheme
- Official Domestic Travel – Use of the lowest practical fare (RMG 404)
- International Travel – Use of the best fare of the day (RMG 405)
- Aviation White Paper



## Definitions

Term	Definition
Circular economy	The circular economy is an economic model for achieving sustainable and productive use of resources. In practice it requires reducing the use of new materials, making materials durable, repairable and safe, and collecting, reusing and recycling materials.
Embodied emissions	All greenhouse gas emissions that are released as part of creating and making a product ready for use.
Greenhouse gases and greenhouse gas emissions	<p>Greenhouse gases are gases in the atmosphere such as water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide that can absorb infrared radiation, trapping heat in the atmosphere.</p> <p>This greenhouse effect means that emissions of greenhouse gases due to human activity cause global warming. For more information, visit the <a href="#">Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change</a> website.</p>
National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS) Energy Star rating	<p>The NABERS Energy Star rating is a performance rating tool that compares the energy efficiency of like-for-like buildings against a set of benchmarks and then awards the building a star rating between 1-6. The scope of the rating can extend to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Base building: the common areas and systems of a building typically controlled and operated by a landlord (e.g. lifts, building entry and security lighting, building wide air conditioning).</li><li>• Tenancy: the areas and systems of a building for the use of the tenant (e.g. tenanted floor space, including lighting and appliances).</li><li>• Whole building: includes both the base building and tenancy, and so largely covers situations where the tenant leases the entire building.</li></ul>
National(ly) Determined Contribution (NDC)	Under the Paris Agreement, Australia must submit emissions reduction commitments known as Nationally Determined Contributions. The latest NDC submission was made in 2022, committing Australia to a reduction in emissions to 43% below 2005 levels by 2030. The Australian Government has a specific NDC to reach Net Zero from government operations by 2030.



Term	Definition
Net Zero by 2030 / Net Zero 2030	A target set by the Australian Government to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions from government operations by the year 2030.
Office space	<p>A room or rooms in a building that provide suitable space for office operations.</p> <p>A building is not considered primarily an office property if 50% or more of the leased or owned building is considered non-office. Further guidance will be produced to specify non-office categories. Noting that if a premise is not primarily an office space, office requirements will apply to the office area if it has greater than 1,000sqm of office space. For more information, see Leased office accommodation on the Department of Finance website.</p>
Property Service Providers (PSPs)	Outsourced providers responsible for delivering leasing services, property and facilities management services and ancillary services to Commonwealth entities under the Property Services Co-ordinated Procurement Arrangements. For more information, visit <a href="#">Property Services Coordinated Procurement</a> on the Department of Finance website.
Renewable electricity	Electricity that is generated from renewable sources without the production of greenhouse gases or other toxic or environmentally damaging by-products. This electricity can also be created through the reduction of net greenhouse gases (e.g. the burning of methane which produces carbon dioxide but reduces the net greenhouse effect by a factor of 80 compared to allowing the methane to escape to the atmosphere). Renewable electricity includes, but is not limited to, various types of solar generation, wind energy, hydroelectricity, stored energy from renewable sources, geothermal generation and wave energy generation. Electricity from “waste-to-energy” (where it is the incineration of domestic and industrial mixed garbage) does not fall under this definition due to the adverse environmental impacts of the toxic chemicals released.
RMG	Resource Management Guide.



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Term	Definition
Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions	<p>Scope 1 emissions reflect emissions from sources owned or controlled by Government, including the stationary combustion of fuels (boilers, generators), and transportation (vehicle fleet).</p> <p>Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions which occur because of the activities that generate electricity, which is consumed by an entity, but is generated outside that entity's boundaries. They are physically produced by the burning of fossil fuels by the generator of the electricity.</p> <p>Scope 3 emissions reflect other indirect emissions produced through Government activities.</p>
Whole-of-Australian-Government arrangement	<p>This document relates to the Federal or Australian Government. At the Australian Government level these procurement arrangements are often called 'Whole-of-Australian-Government' (WoAG) arrangements to differentiate from State Government arrangements. WoAG arrangements can be mandated for certain Commonwealth entities or can be 'cooperative', which is not mandatory.</p>